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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*

PRIORITY THEMES: DEVELOPMENT: WOMEN IN URBAN AREAS: POPULATION, NUTRITION AND HEALTH FACTORS FOR WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING MIGRATION, DRUG CONSUMPTION AND ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME

Statement submitted by the International Council on Social Welfare, International Federation of Agricultural Producers, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I; American Association of Retired Persons, Associated Country Women of the World, Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), International Abolitionist Federation, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE), International Federation of University Women, International Federation Terre des Hommes, Lutheran World Federation, Medical Women's International Association, National Council of German Women's Organizations - Federal Union of Women's Organizations and Women's Groups of German Associations, E.V., Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Socialist International Women (SIW), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Federation for Mental Health, World Federation of Methodist Women (WFMW), World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations and World Young Women's Christian Association, non-governmental organizations in

* E/CN.6/1994/1.

consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category II; and International Council of Nurses, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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The non-governmental organizations listed above, concerned about the nutritional status of all women, and men, but particularly those in urban areas, welcome the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Development: women in urban areas: population, nutrition and health factors for women in development, including migration, drug consumption and acquired immune deficiency syndrome" (E/CN.6/1994/3).

1. Urbanization is a major socio-economic trend. By the year 2000 half of all women will be living in urban areas, mostly in developing regions. Urbanization results in physical, social and economic change that can lead to poverty thereby exposing urban women to higher health risks and malnutrition than women in rural areas.

2. A disproportionate number of the world's poor are women and due to gender discrimination poor women are more likely to suffer hunger and malnutrition than men. Globally, and in spite of many efforts, the nutritional status of women and girls, especially the urban poor, is deteriorating. The time has come to reverse this trend.

3. While poverty is the major cause of poor nutritional status, there are other contributing factors: lack of education and health care, discriminating agricultural and economic policies, as well as political instability. We therefore underline the importance of the 1992 International Conference on Nutrition World Declaration and Plan of Action for Nutrition which emphasized the need to address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition.

4. Globally, one third of all households are headed by single women, but the percentage is even higher in urban areas. Working women are often the key to family survival. Reduction of their income automatically has a negative effect on the quality of food and medical care they can give their families, increasing the risk of malnutrition and infection.

5. The enormous contribution by women in rural areas should be recognized and their resources strengthened and improved. Urban planners need to improve the status of rural women, giving them greater control over resources, to avoid or slow down the trend in urban migration.

6. Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, highlights women's critical role in sustainable development. As the prime users of domestic energy and water, they can contribute significantly to safer management of environmentally sound

technologies in urban areas. Replacing polluting fuels and providing easier access to water can reduce deprivation in urban areas.

7. Municipal governments frequently find it difficult to deliver essential urban services. The role of non-governmental organizations, communities, support groups and women in particular in obtaining and delivering these urban services should be recognized and supported. Women's commitment to urban improvement should be matched by official support.

8. The United Nations agencies should do everything possible to allocate staff and resources for a women-in-development component in all programmes, and ensure coordination with other agencies to avoid duplication and increase efficiency.

9. We therefore call on all Member States in their search for solutions to the situation of women living in poor urban areas:

(a) To support a holistic and integrated approach to urban development, involving both women and men in the total process;

(b) To make the elimination of poverty, and hence malnutrition, a national priority;

(c) To adopt policies:

(i) Which reverse or slow down rural urban migration;

(ii) Which ensure women's rights to land tenure, property and access to credit for rural women;

(d) To reallocate resources to draw up and implement, with the collaboration of local non-governmental organizations and women, the International Conference of Nutrition National Plans of Action, the goals of the World Summit for Children, and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies;

(e) To provide during the entire life cycle of women, accessible health care and nutrition as a fundamental human right;

(f) To support gender-specific nutritional research, in particular concerning adolescents and the ageing, and to document the effects of nutritional taboos and gender discrimination;

(g) To ensure that home economics and nutrition become part of all urban and rural school curricula, education, vocational training programmes, health-care centres and community projects;

(h) To strengthen existing national machinery for the advancement of women and to help in the development of such focal points in countries where they are not currently in place.